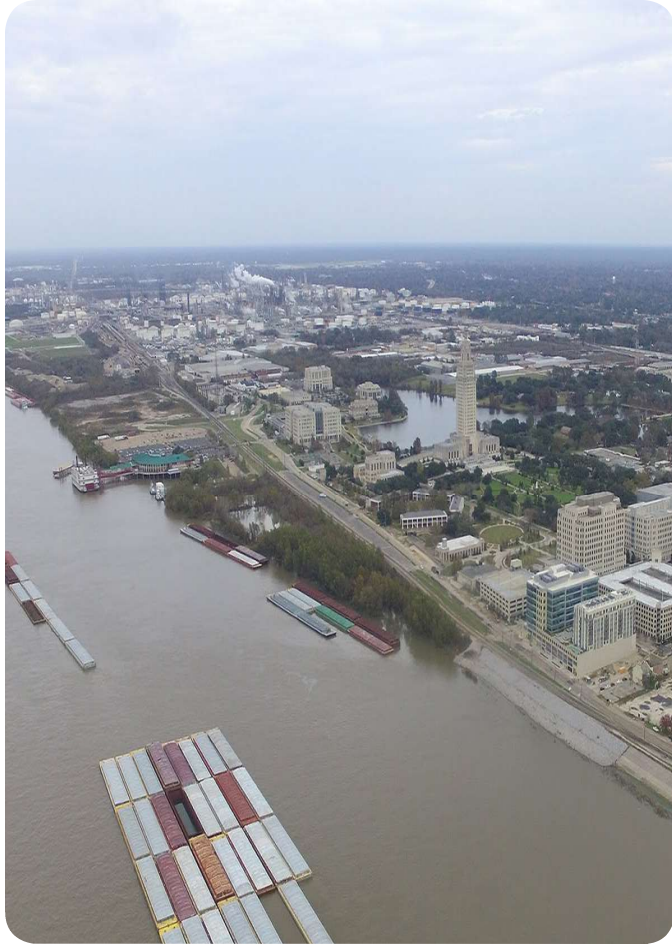


# Economic Development

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*Mississippi River*

## Introduction: Economic Development

The health, quality of life and sustainability of a city is grounded in its ability to retain and create jobs that pay a family wage and an environment where businesses can thrive. A sound economic development plan and accompanying strategy are central to realizing East Baton Rouge's full potential. Economic development must be thoroughly integrated with the land use, transportation, housing, and other key elements of the plan. A strong, diverse economy will provide many of the resources necessary to accomplish plan goals. However, economic prosperity requires a strategic approach where new business ventures emerge and thrive.

## Core Values and Aspirations of the Vision

A diverse group of residents and stakeholders representing all parts of East Baton Rouge Parish provided input on FUTUREBR through workshops, open houses, interviews, focus groups and survey discussions. Respondents consistently cited the following core values and aspirations they believed should be the foundation for building a vision for East Baton Rouge Parish.

Core values that relate to economic development:

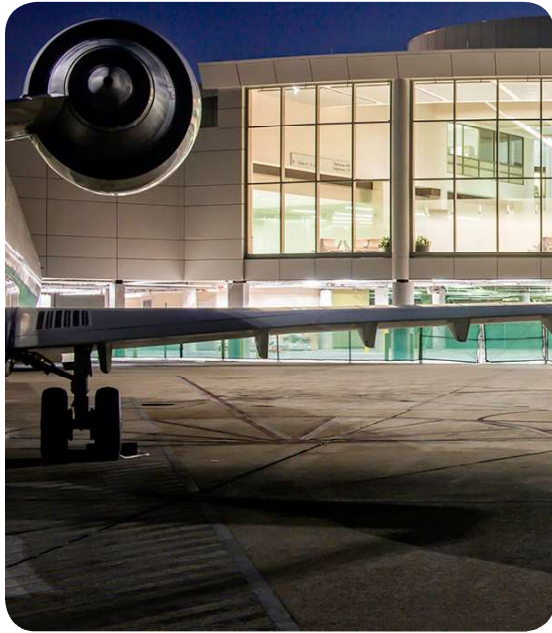
**Prosperity:** All residents have access to a thriving economy with job opportunities in growing diverse businesses.

**Equity:** All residents have access to a good education, public services, housing and job opportunities.

**Diversity:** The City is known for embracing diversity and accepting other cultures, ethnicities and groups.

**Strong Neighborhoods and Communities:** Neighborhoods in all areas of the City are desirable places to live and have a range of housing types and nearby amenities to serve the City-Parish's residents.

**Sustainability:** The future reflects the creativity and resiliency of East Baton Rouge's young residents and offers a sustainable place for youth to thrive – with a focus on building a future based on fiscal, physical, environmental, economic and equitable sustainability.



*Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport*

## Part 1: Long-Term Socioeconomic Trends

East Baton Rouge Parish is the largest employment center in the nine-parish metropolitan statistical area. The City-Parish holds approximately 62% of the region's jobs, bringing employees from across the region into the Parish every day to work, shop, dine, and access services. Some of the largest employers in the City-Parish are also those that have historically been among the most stable: government, education, the petrochemical industry, and the medical industry. In addition, the City-Parish government, its contracted economic development agency (Baton Rouge Area Chamber), and the wider business community have focused efforts in recent years on business recruitment and retention.

Baton Rouge offers a considerable number of economic strengths and assets. It's a major center for higher education. Louisiana State University, Southern University, Baton Rouge Community College, and multiple trade schools are all located in the City-Parish, graduating approximately 8,000 students every year and providing a wider platform for research, innovation, and workforce development.

## Part 1: Socioeconomic Trends



*Lee High School*

Like many areas in the nation, East Baton Rouge Parish's economic growth is challenged by brownfields and neglected urban properties. To help address these conditions, the City-Parish has established a Brownfields Program and a Redevelopment Authority. Since it was established in 2000, the East Baton Rouge Parish Brownfields Program has leveraged \$1 million in federal grants into more than \$28 million to help fund environmental assessments and remediation on more than 190 properties.

In addition, the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority was established in 2007 to assist in redeveloping disinvested areas within the City-Parish, including residential, commercial and industrial properties.

The East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System (K-12), the largest district in the state with 99 schools, has received national recognition for improvements it has achieved in recent years. The school system receives support of City-Parish residents in the form of a one-cent sales tax dedicated to public education.



*Entergy site*

The City-Parish is located along key transportation routes (roads, water, rail), which include the I-10/I-12 corridor, railroad/airport infrastructure, and the Port of Greater Baton Rouge. These provide Baton Rouge businesses with the ability to transport people and products efficiently.

However, there are a number of challenges to the City-Parish's economic future. These include broader quality-of-life factors, such as concerns about public safety, the quality of the public K-12 school system, low air and water quality, a continuing population shift to the outlying parts of the Parish and other parishes, and acute economic and racial disparity within the City-Parish. These factors have broader effects, both direct and indirect, on the economy of the City-Parish. For instance, local university graduates continue to seek employment opportunities and a better quality-of-life in other cities.

Employers report difficulty in recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce, which affects the City-Parish's ability to keep existing businesses and recruit new

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 1: Socioeconomic Trends

employers. In recent years, quality of place has moved toward the top of the list of challenges facing businesses and employees in the City-Parish.

The City-Parish now needs to make pivotal choices about its economic future. Identifying and implementing effective economic development strategies has become a widespread pursuit among communities in the U.S. Some have elected to take a focused approach to economic wellbeing, while others have opted for a more comprehensive engagement. The City-Parish's interests are best served through the latter.

Economic development is most commonly defined as making the economy grow, and is thus typically measured as increases in gross domestic product (the dollar value of what the economy produces) or in number of employees (jobs). Since a strong economy and high employment means people can buy goods and services, growth in household and per capita income has become another economic development indicator. However, in the last 20 years, a broader view of economic development has emerged and gained support in communities throughout the U.S.

In this broader-view definition, job and business development are still the primary objective of local government economic development efforts. This broader definition also means a strong economy includes paying attention to social and environmental issues – such as environmental quality and social justice.

More attractive neighborhoods, quality schools, and less crime all make an area more attractive to business development. The recommendations outlined in this chapter focus on the primary concerns of economic development (i.e., economic activity and jobs), but also address other important quality-of-place issues that ultimately affect the economic well-being of the City-Parish.

*"Economic development is the process of improving a community's wellbeing through job creation, business growth, and income growth (factors that are the typical and reasonable focus of economic development policy), as well as through improvements to the wider social and natural environment that strengthen the economy."* Moore, Meck, and Ebenhoh. 2006. Economic Development Toolbox: Strategies and Methods. PAS Report American Planning Association Press. Chicago.



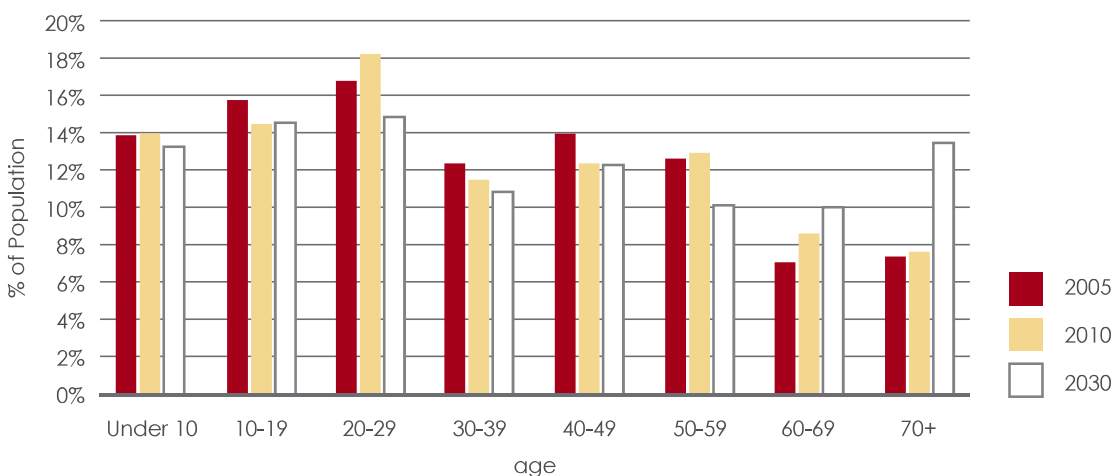
### Existing and Future Conditions

East Baton Rouge Parish is the most populous parish in Louisiana. In the last two decades, East Baton Rouge Parish has experienced an 18% increase in its population, from 380,699 in 1990 to 447,037 in 2016 (ACS estimate). That is an average increase of 0.73% per year, which is faster than the state of Louisiana (0.36%), but slower than the region, which grew at 1.26% per year. During this same time period, the share of the region's population living in East Baton Rouge Parish declined.

### Population Demographics

The Parish is expected to experience shifts in the percentage of the population in each age group over the next 20 years. According to state forecasts prepared in 2005, the percentage of the Parish's population over the age of 60 is expected to grow from 16% in 2005, to 25% in 2030. These shifts reflect national trends as one of the nation's largest demographic groups (Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1965) continues to age and retire in greater numbers. Figure 1 illustrates the Parish's age profile in 2005, 2010, and projected for 2030.

**Figure 1:** Percent of Population by Age, East Baton Rouge Parish, 2005 and Projected 2010 and 2030



Source: State of Louisiana Population Projections. [http://www.louisiana.gov/Explore/Population\\_Projections/](http://www.louisiana.gov/Explore/Population_Projections/)

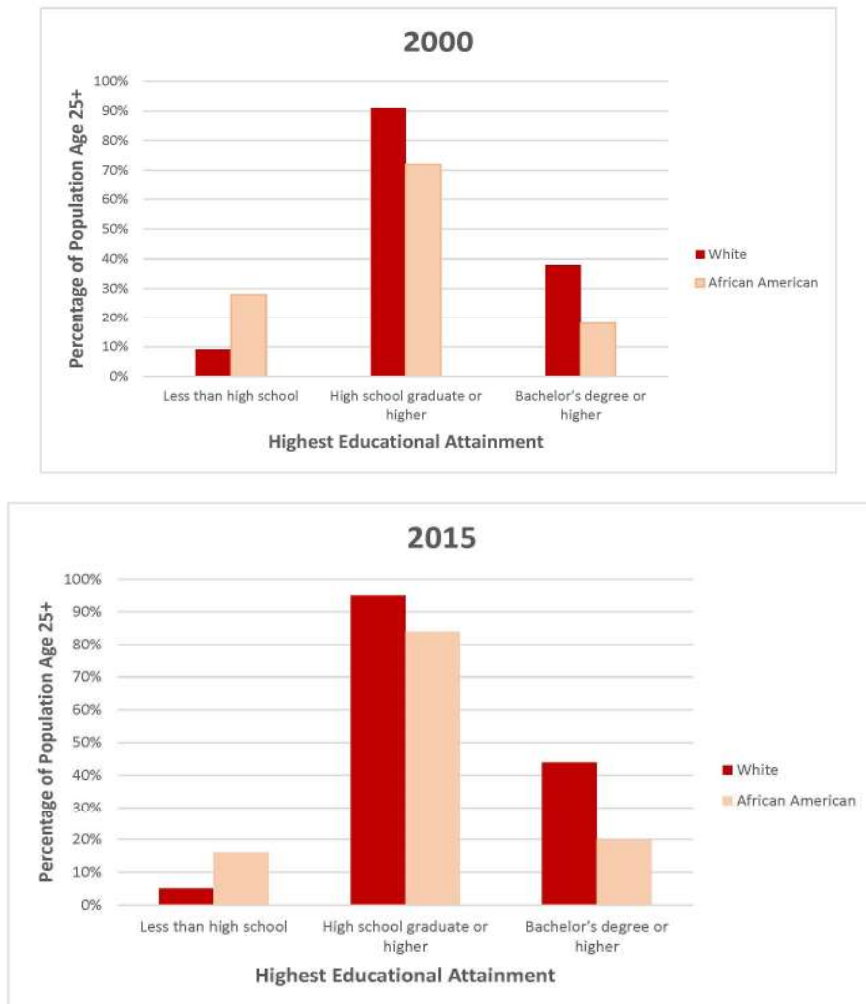
# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 1: Socioeconomic Trends

### Educational Attainment

Educational levels have increased for all residents of the Parish during the last decade, although white residents continue to reach higher levels than African Americans. Figures 2 and 3 show the highest level of educational attainment for white and African American residents above the age of 25 in East Baton Rouge Parish in 2000 and 2015. In 2015, 44% of white residents had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 20% of African American residents. Five percent of white residents in 2015 did not have a high school diploma, compared to 16% of African American residents.

**Figure 2 and 3:** Educational Attainment by Race, East Baton Rouge Parish, 2000 and 2015

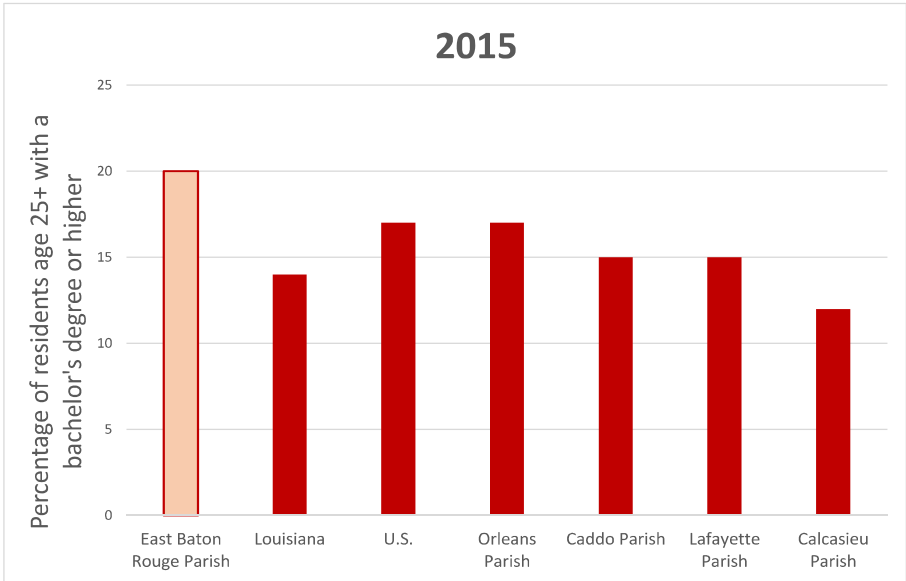


Source: U.S. Census 2000, American Community Survey 2015



Figure 4 shows educational attainment for African American residents in East Baton Rouge Parish in 2015 compared to the nation, the state of Louisiana and other parishes in Louisiana. The proportion of African American residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is greater in East Baton Rouge Parish than any of the other regions.

Figure 4: Comparison of Educational Attainment for African American Residents, 2015



Source: American Community Survey

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 1: Socioeconomic Trends

### Income

Table 1 shows per capita income in East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, and the U.S. in 1990, 2000, and 2010. Parishwide per capita income in 2010 was \$40,132, significantly higher than the U.S. rate (\$27,334). Incomes in the Parish grew by 55 percent between 1990 and 2010, slower than Louisiana (66%) but faster than the U.S. (25%) during the same time period.

Figure 6 compares the percentage of population in poverty by race. In 2015, a higher percentage of African Americans (23%) live in poverty compared to white (5%) residents in East Baton Rouge Parish. African American children (33%) are more than four times more likely to live in poverty compared to white children (8%).

Income is one factor that contributes to financial security. Asset ownership is another factor. Owning assets provides greater economic stability and mobility. A household is generally considered “asset poor” if it has insufficient net worth to support itself at the federal poverty level for three months in the absence of income. According to the Prosperity Now Scorecard, in 2017, approximately 30% of East Baton Rouge Parish’s households were considered extremely asset poor (zero net worth), which is higher than the national average of 26%.

**Table 1:** Comparison of per Capital Income

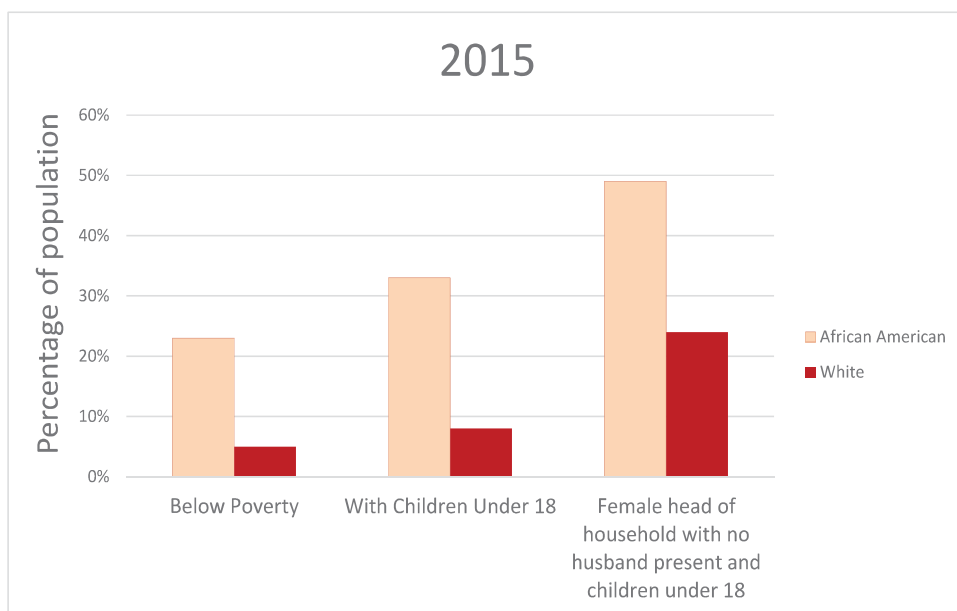
East Baton Rouge Parish	
1990	\$25,914
2000	\$27,162
2010	\$40,132

Louisiana	
1990	\$22,382
2000	\$23,552
2010	\$37,217

U.S.	
1990	\$21,837
2000	\$26,271
2010	\$27,334

Source: U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010. Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Figure 5:** Percent of Population Living in Poverty by Race, East Baton Rouge Parish, 2015

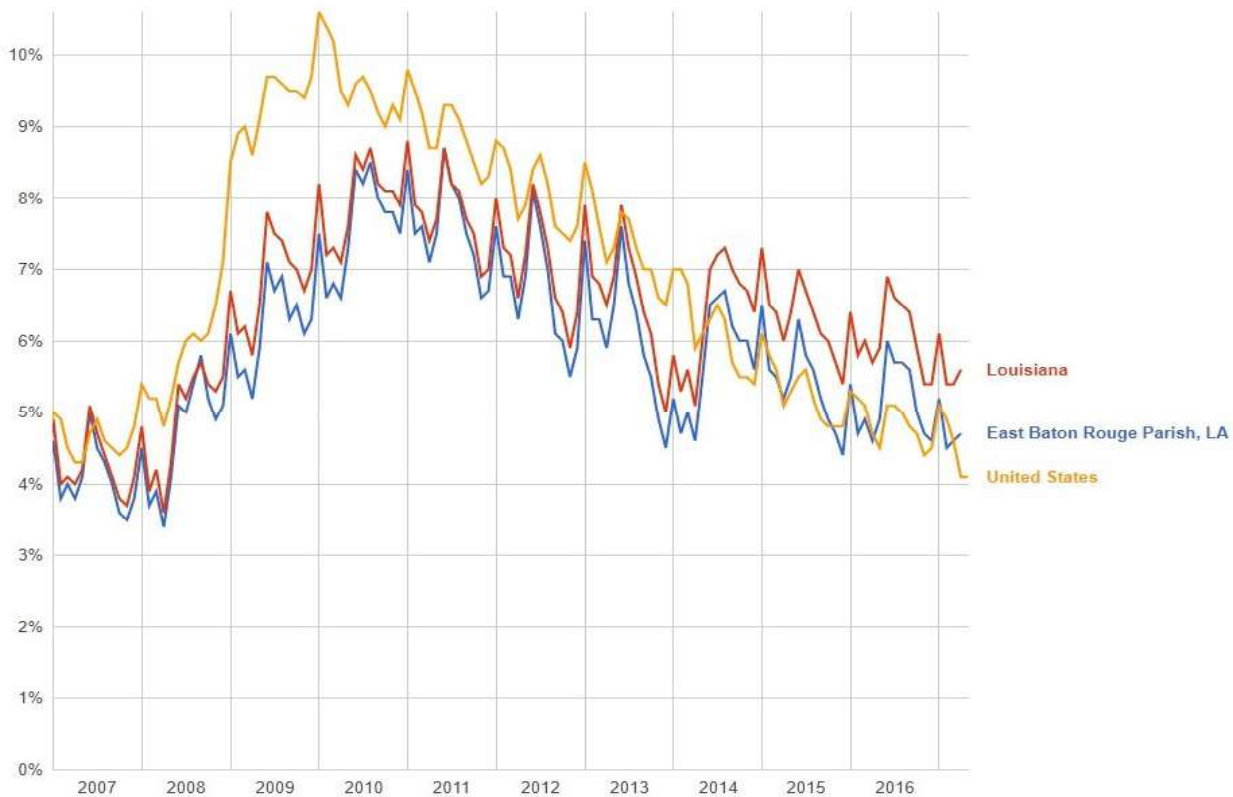


Source: American Community Survey 2015

### Unemployment

East Baton Rouge Parish's unemployment rate follows national trends, but has been higher than the national rate since 2014. Figure 7 shows the unemployment rate in the United States, Louisiana, and East Baton Rouge Parish from 2007 through 2017. In April 2017, the Parish's unemployment rate was 4.7% compared to 5.8% in the state and 4.4% in the U.S.

**Figure 6:** Unemployment rate, United States, Louisiana, and East Baton Rouge Parish, 2007-2017



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Note: Unemployment figures not seasonally adjusted

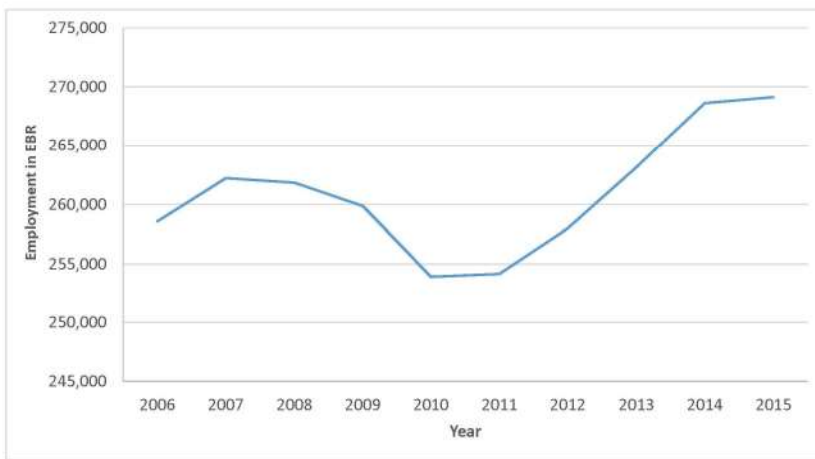
# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 1: Socioeconomic Trends

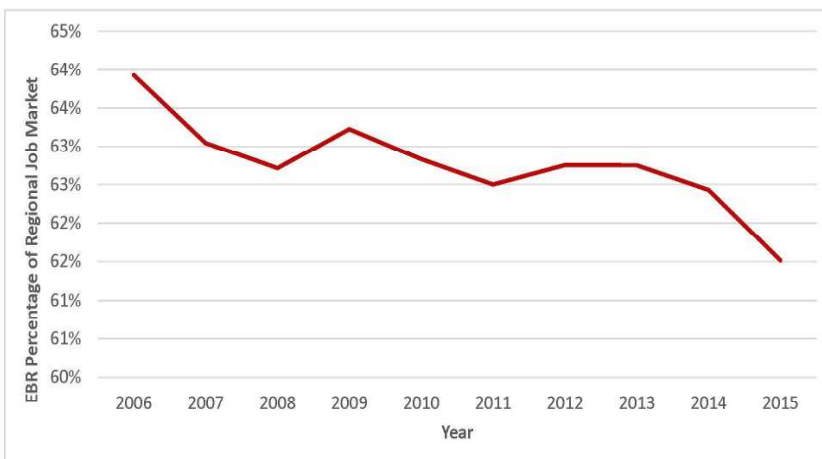
### Employment

Figure 7 shows total employment in East Baton Rouge Parish. In 2015, the Parish had 269,122 of the region's 437,505 jobs, making up 62% of the metropolitan region's total employment. This is a decrease from 2006, meaning that outlying areas saw greater employment growth than East Baton Rouge Parish (Figure 8).

**Figure 7:** Total Employment in East Baton Rouge Parish, 2007-2017



**Figure 8:** East Baton Rouge Parish's Share of the Regional Labor Market, 2007-2017



Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Note: RLMA 2 refers to the Baton Rouge Regional Labor Market Area, as defined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, which includes the following parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

## Part 1: Socioeconomic Trends

The largest industries in the Parish in 2015 were health care and social assistance, construction, retail trade, and educational services. Sectors with the highest job increases since 2013 were administrative services, construction, and transportation and warehousing. Industries with the largest declines in employment since 2013 were agriculture, information, and government.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) develops statewide employment projections that consider historical trends as well as other

indicators, such as plant closures, rig counts, and employment rates. Table 2 shows the projected employment growth for East Baton Rouge Parish's regional labor market area between 2015 and 2024. LWC projects that the regional labor market will add 38,787 jobs to the economy between 2015 and 2024, or about 8% growth. The highest rates of growth are projected in mining (28%); professional, scientific and technical services (17%); health care and social assistance (17%); and accommodation and food services (17%), for a total of 20,400 jobs across those four industries.

**Table 2:** Projected Employment by Industry Sector, Baton Rouge Labor Market Area (RMLA2) 2015-2024

Industry	2015	2024	Change 2015-2024	
			Number	%
Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry, and Hunting	2,505	2,333	-172	-7%
Mining	1,046	1,338	292	28%
Utilities	2,430	2,488	69	3%
Construction	51,820	51,147	-673	-1%
Manufacturing	33,007	34,750	1,743	5%
Wholesale Trade	15,226	16,131	905	6%
Retail Trade	51,019	55,322	4,303	8%
Transportation and Warehousing	15,841	17,740	1,899	12%
Information	7,114	6,731	-383	-5%
Finance and Insurance	12,761	13,705	944	7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6,116	6,631	515	8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22,126	25,799	3,673	17%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	5,971	6,388	417	7%
Administrative and Waste Services	23,988	27,388	3,400	14%
Educational Services	41,764	45,189	3,425	8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	59,560	69,517	9,957	17%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	6,171	6,310	139	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	38,018	44,496	6,478	17%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	39,088	42,086	2,998	8%
Government	36,162	35,020	-1,142	-3%
<b>TOTAL, All Industries</b>	<b>471,733</b>	<b>510,520</b>	<b>38,787</b>	<b>8%</b>

Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission

Note: RMLA2 is the Baton Rouge Regional Labor Market Area, which includes the following parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 1: Socioeconomic Trends

### Constraints and Opportunities

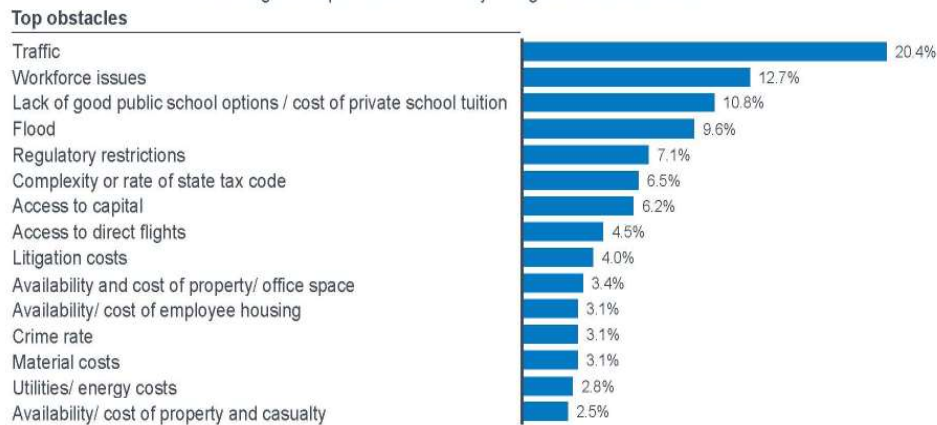
#### Constraints

Constraints and challenges are those things that make it harder for the City-Parish to achieve its economic vision and goals. While these constraints can be significant, they are not insurmountable. Below are the obstacles for businesses identified by business owners in the Capital Region in 2017. The top obstacles identified by business owners were traffic, workforce, and education.

Figure 9: Obstacles for Businesses, 2017

## Obstacles for Businesses

Traffic, workforce, education, and the flood are the top **obstacles** for businesses in the Capital Region  
Percentage of respondents in a survey of regional business leaders\*



\*Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers

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Source: Baton Rouge Area Chamber's 2017 Economic Outlook

### Opportunities and Assets

Opportunities and assets are things that the Parish is doing well, or areas in which it has a comparative advantage.

**Employment center.** The Parish is an employment center and holds about 63% of the region's jobs. This brings residents from all over the region into work every day and to access services. Another strong factor is the continued growth of the state capital and state agencies, which are major employment drivers. They also foster potential for employees to live in the Parish and downtown.

**Stable industrial base/stable employment.** East Baton Rouge Parish is not only an employment center, but also has a relatively strong industrial base and is home to a number of large industrial corporations. Some of the largest employers are government, petrochemical, medical, and higher education. The largest employers have also generally been the most stable.

**Water/freight transportation infrastructure.** Proximity to the port, interstate highways, and freight railroad infrastructure are important assets.

**Higher education and research facilities/educated workforce.** The presence of higher education institutions – including Louisiana State University, Southern University, and Baton Rouge Community College – is one of the key strengths of the Parish. This benefits not just the Parish, but also the entire region (in terms of education and training, as well as research and innovation).

**Commercial and medical services.** Many stakeholders noted that the City-Parish provides many of the necessary commercial and medical services that residents need. There is little need to leave the Parish for most commercial and medical services.

**Lifestyle.** East Baton Rouge Parish and the region provide a good lifestyle. Many people note the following as factors: the lower cost of living relative to larger markets such as Houston and Atlanta, the small-town feel, college atmosphere, festivals and parades, parks and recreation facilities and programs, and the reputation as a sportsman's paradise.

**Distance from the coast.** The area is more attractive for businesses and residents because it offers more stability during the storm season and less risk of disruption and added costs.

**Redevelopment** The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority was established in 2007 to assist in redeveloping disinvested areas within the City-Parish, including residential, commercial and industrial properties.

**Environmental assessments.** Since it was established in 2000, the East Baton Rouge Parish's Brownfields Program has leveraged \$1 million in federal grants into more than \$28 million in investments to help fund redevelopment of abandoned industrial sites in the Parish.





ExxonMobil



IBM

## Part 2: Developing Desired Outcomes

### Economic Development Goals

East Baton Rouge Parish's economic development goals were developed with the understanding that land use, transportation, housing and the City-Parish's fiscal health are inextricably linked and essential to all residents' quality of life. Specific objectives and actions for each goal (detailed in the next section) will help provide high-quality jobs by:

- Retaining and attracting businesses that supply jobs.
- Enabling new ventures to emerge and thrive.
- Creating an improved quality-of-life for Baton Rouge's well-trained, innovative workforce.

### Develop, Cultivate and Retain Talent

A well-trained workforce is an essential component of economic development. Many firms rely on a local workforce rather than bringing workers with them. Though some companies require unskilled workers, most firms today require job-related skills in addition to quality secondary and higher education. Attracting and retaining talented entrepreneurs will make the City-Parish a location of choice for the selective business component of the market.

Education plays a powerful role in providing the workforce with training necessary for a growing economy. The City-Parish should coordinate with schools to align workforce development efforts to match the skills needed by target industries. To do this, the City-Parish must communicate

## Part 2: Developing Desired Outcomes

with representatives of the industry clusters to understand what skills are most beneficial for their workforce. Next, the City-Parish should develop a coordinated approach with educational institutions to ensure the curricula focuses on developing these skills.

In addition to colleges and universities, K-12 schools play multiple economic development roles. First, having a high quality K-12 system helps attract and retain high-skill firms and their employees, many of whom want the best education possible for their children. Second, not all high school graduates go on to pursue higher education. Making sure high school graduates have skills that can help launch their careers is important for East Baton Rouge Parish's economic and community health. Finally, for those unable to complete high school, the K-12 system provides resources for alternative education and training.

### **Support Private Sector Business Development**

Incentives designed to attract business or help existing businesses grow are important because they will ideally lead to business investment, new jobs, and ultimately increase demand for goods and services. Access to capital is especially important for small businesses and technology-based businesses that are considered higher risk. Traditional lenders such as banks often need to be complemented by angel or venture investors. In addition, public resource tools such as low interest, subordinate loans can foster greater success among these companies. This goal primarily focuses on

processes such as coordination, marketing, outreach, and regulatory review – all of which create a climate supportive of business ventures.

The importance of adequate infrastructure in attracting industrial development should not be overlooked. Industrial businesses often have specific infrastructure needs, including the ability to ship products by truck, heavy rail port or air. Additionally, many industrial firms use large amounts of water, wastewater, and electricity. To attract industrial development, whether for expanding existing companies or recruiting new ones, East Baton Rouge Parish needs to ensure that industrial land has access to the variety of infrastructure that companies and developers may require.

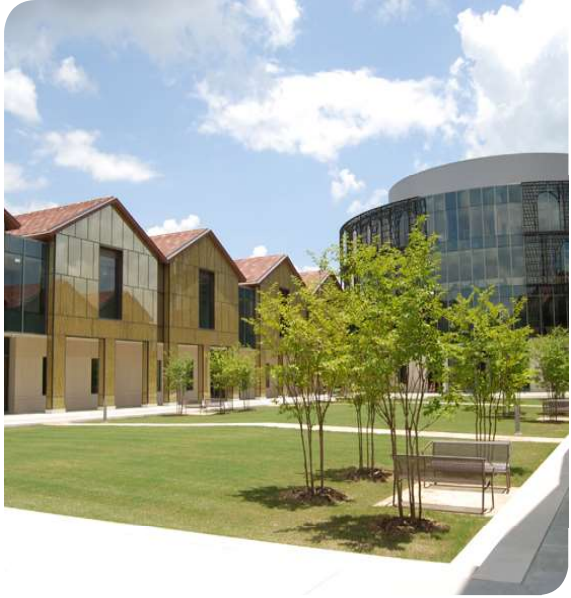
In general, the responsibility for providing this type of infrastructure falls to state and local governments. Sometimes there is a partnership between the private and public sectors (e.g., railroads, some utilities). The more efficiently East Baton Rouge Parish can provide or facilitate this expected infrastructure, the lower the cost will be for business development and operation.

### **Support Employers in Key Geographic Areas**

Creating an environment that is supportive of development is both fundamental and critically important. Talent and businesses are more attracted to cities that have energized, mixed-use downtowns, diverse, vibrant neighborhoods and vital, connected employment centers.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 2: Developing Desired Outcomes



*LSU EJ Ourso College of Business*

Maintaining a jobs and housing balance in these areas allows residents to work closer to their homes and to take advantage of alternative transportation options. As more people work and live in areas, more services will be added and these districts will become even more desirable. Encouraging employers to locate in proximity to one another also tends to support collaboration among firms and strengthens connections between the private and public sectors.

Areas within the City-Parish that are already designated for industrial development should be marketed towards industrial firms. The City-Parish's efforts at business recruitment should focus on attracting companies that will strengthen existing industry clusters.

### **Enhance the Profile of Higher Education and Research Institutions**

In addition to preparing the workforce, institutions of higher learning in the City-Parish also fulfill key research functions that can help stimulate innovation and attract investment. Higher education and research institutions should be recognized as economic drivers. The City-Parish and universities should develop a "united front" of public and private interest within the Parish to support efforts to secure State funding for higher education and to develop alternative ways of increasing resources.

A working group of high-level representatives from universities including Baton Rouge Community College, Southern University and Louisiana State University should be convened to explore viable areas of cooperation on research projects. Faculty and staff with research capacity and interests from New Orleans and other parts of the state should be part of the dialogue.

## Part 3: Goals, Objectives and Actions to Achieve the Vision

This section details the economic development goals, objectives and actions that will move East Baton Rouge Parish toward the community's Vision.

**Goals** are the big overarching ideas, changes or practices that are essential to realize the community's Vision.

**Objectives** establish specific, measurable, attainable and realistic goals that guide how the Comprehensive Plan is implemented in a way that will achieve the Vision.

**Actions** outline the steps needed to achieve the objectives.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 3: Goals, Objectives and Actions

### Economic Development Goals

1. Develop, cultivate and retain talent.
2. Support private sector business development.
3. Support employers in key geographic areas.
4. Connect education and training institutions with private and public sectors.

### Economic Development Goal 1

#### Develop, cultivate and retain talent.

##### Objective 1.1

Promote workforce development programs that align with the target industry sectors.

##### Actions to support objective 1.1:

- 1.1.1 Continue to improve delivery of services from the East Baton Rouge Workforce Investment Board to develop trained workers. Consider the Louisiana Fast Start Program as a model.
- 1.1.2 Support Baton Rouge Area Chamber's Talent Development Program.
- 1.1.3 Build on capabilities of local institutions of higher education (such as BRCC's Corporate Training and Continuing Education and others) to develop career technical education that serves high school students and adults.

##### Objective 1.2

Enhance collaborations and partnerships to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation.

##### Actions to support objective 1.2:

- 1.2.1 Establish mentorship programs to connect seasoned entrepreneurs with new emerging talent.
- 1.2.2 Create an entrepreneurs' forum where seasoned entrepreneurs convene quarterly to listen to, evaluate and offer recommendations on how to commercialize ideas for new ventures from new talent.
- 1.2.3 Bring seasoned entrepreneurs into business, engineering and other programs at BRCC, Southern University, and LSU to provide early

## Part 3: Goals, Objectives and Actions

exposure to students about innovation, experimenting, risk taking, and shepherding good ideas into commercialization.

### Objective 1.3

Build partnerships and enhance coordination to better implement economic development objectives.

#### Actions to support objective 1.3:

- 1.3.1 Establish an Economic Development Advisory Board to review and recommend improvements in policy and implementation. Membership should include the City-Parish, BRAC, private sector and non-profit partners, school district representatives, and university/college representatives.
- 1.3.2 Develop a long-range economic development strategic plan, in collaboration with BRAC, Louisiana Economic Development Department, and private/non-profit sector partners.

### Objective 1.4

Attract and retain talent and businesses.

#### Actions to support objective 1.4:

- 1.4.1 Provide diverse development tools to leverage private infill development.
- 1.4.2 Continue to support the Baton Rouge Health District to further enhance its role and attraction as an economic development engine.

### Objective 1.5

Improve access to economic development opportunities, job training and life skills for economically disadvantaged populations.

#### Actions to support objective 1.5:

- 1.5.1 Provide more mentoring programs to disadvantaged populations, particularly K-12 students, that focus on basic “soft” skills as well as technical and vocational skills.
- 1.5.2 Improve partnerships with established minority-owned business programs to enhance City-Parish policies that help small and minority-owned businesses compete for government contracts.
- 1.5.3 Increase participation in City-Parish contracts by minorities and evaluate the benefits of creating a Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and/or Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MBE) program.
- 1.5.4 Develop a workforce employment program that places emphasis on the training and job placement of special populations, such as ex-offenders and people with disabilities.
- 1.5.5 Identify how and where medical and educational institutions can be integrated into mixed-use developments in neighborhoods that have experienced disinvestment to stimulate economic vitality while offering needed services.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Part 3: Goals, Objectives and Actions

### Economic Development Goal 2

#### Support private sector business development.

##### Objective 2.1

Identify businesses in growing industry sectors (and their suppliers).

##### Actions to support objective 2.1:

- 2.1.1 Continue to identify and refine the list of target industry sectors that will further diversify the City-Parish's economic base into growth-oriented sectors. Focus on assistance programs to enhance the growth of the following target sectors: advanced manufacturing, corporate facilities and headquarters operations, digital media, emerging energy and bio-fuels, entertainment and film production, specialty chemicals, and specialty medical/biomedical.
- 2.1.2 Partner with the BRAC and other local economic development allies (such as the airport, LSU, Southern, BRCC, etc.) to develop and implement business development program that targets investment from foreign-owned companies.
- 2.1.3 Adopt annual metrics and establish accountability mechanisms for public dollars spent on economic development.

##### Objective 2.2

Attract and develop research and development across public and private sectors.

##### Action to support objective 2.2:

- 2.2.1 Consider public investment in a center for research and development, in partnership with area universities, hospitals, and

businesses that can be leveraged to promote investment and stimulate more collaboration among regional players.

##### Objective 2.3

Support retention and growth of existing companies.

##### Actions to support objective 2.3:

- 2.3.1 Provide programs that help local and existing businesses increase market share.
- 2.3.2 Support existing small business resources such as SCORE and maintain a small business resource guide with easy-to-follow information on business resources in the region, as well as information on federal, state and local business loan and tax incentive programs.
- 2.3.3 Intensify partnering between BRAC, universities and the City-Parish on BRAC's business retention and expansion visitation program for existing firms.
- 2.3.4 Support and market business incubators that help grow local start-ups.
- 2.3.5 Support new and expanded cooperative business ventures, which can reduce risk while improving market impact of small businesses.
- 2.3.6 Promote and facilitate procurement of Small Business Innovation Research applications for federal grants to support emerging innovative companies.

##### Objective 2.4

Create a customer friendly, efficient permitting and regulatory process.



## Part 3: Goals, Objectives and Actions

### Actions to support objective 2.4:

- 2.4.1 Expand current offering of enhanced access to City-Parish development activities.
- 2.4.2 Continue to evaluate opportunities to streamline the development and review process.
- 2.4.3 Utilize consolidated facilities to establish a “one-stop” permit center and a guaranteed review process for qualified economic development projects to enhance efficiency and predictability of the plan review and building permit process.

### Objective 2.5

Explore innovative funding from a variety of sources.

### Action to support objective 2.5:

- 2.5.1 Formalize a network to deliver angel and venture capital to complement and expand upon existing informal capital availability so that more emerging businesses have access to needed resources.

### Objective 2.6

Use incentives to reduce development costs for businesses.

### Actions to support objective 2.6:

- 2.6.1 Evaluate and adjust the performance and effectiveness of existing incentives, including but not limited to Enterprise Zones, Economic Development Districts, and Foreign Trade Zones and recommend changes to improve their effectiveness.
- 2.6.2 Promote existing incentives (e.g., tax credits, low interest loans, land banking/ land write-downs) and cultivate promising new programs.

- 2.6.3 Establish a deal-closing fund (funded jointly by private and public sources) to create incentives for business expansion or relocation in the City-Parish where the return on investment (both private and public) can be demonstrated.
- 2.6.4 Consider public-private partnerships to fund key infrastructure improvements that will enhance the readiness of potential commerce/business parks.

### Objective 2.7

Recognize environmental planning and design as supportive of economic development.

### Action to support objective 2.7:

- 2.7.1 Exceed minimum environmental requirements and market City-Parish as a green and energy efficient metropolitan area.

## Economic Development Goal 3

### Support employers in key geographic areas.

### Objective 3.1

Enhance public-private partnerships that can focus on revitalizing downtown and other key areas.

### Actions to support objective 3.1:

- 3.1.1 Support the efforts of economic development entities, such as the Downtown Development District, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and Baton Rouge North Economic Development District.
- 3.1.2 Partner with private and non-profit developers to provide housing opportunities (ownership and rental) for all incomes, including support for and

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development of mixed income housing development projects.

- 3.1.3 Support businesses so they can become catalysts for further community improvement rather than functioning as stand-alone projects.

### Objective 3.2

Promote river-oriented development in the downtown area.

#### Actions to support objective 3.2:

- 3.2.1 Craft a phased redevelopment strategy among riverfront property owners, so that both investors/developers and the larger community benefit from the unique, positive role of the Mississippi River.
- 3.2.2 Consider the creation of a downtown-riverfront urban renewal district to help fund key public improvements and leverage stronger private investment in the area.

### Objective 3.3

Support investment in neighborhoods.

#### Actions to support objective 3.3:

- 3.3.1 Continue to assemble and clear the title of under-utilized and adjudicated properties.
- 3.3.2 Develop a long-term tool kit that comprehensively addresses economic development opportunities and challenges.
- 3.3.3 Identify publicly owned sites that could be attractive to private developers.
- 3.3.4 Prioritize the revitalization of underserved areas of Baton Rouge, such as North Baton Rouge, Gardere and Old South Baton Rouge.

### Objective 3.4

Ensure the City-Parish has an adequate supply of sites suitable for development or expansion of employment uses.

#### Actions to support objective 3.4:

- 3.4.1 Partner with BRAC to conduct a parishwide survey to identify sites suitable for commercial and industrial development.
- 3.4.2 Continue to implement the City-Parish's Brownfields Program to facilitate private-sector investment in redevelopment of brownfield sites.

### Objective 3.5

Leverage existing medical and research centers to catalyze more mixed-use development.

#### Actions to support objective 3.5:

- 3.5.1 Develop formal links among the institutions and organizations within medical areas, creating better coordination, communication and transportation.
- 3.5.2 Market the Health District to help attract research opportunities, talent, and new firms.

### Objective 3.6

Capitalize on land suitable for industrial development around the airport and access to major interstate corridors.

#### Action to support this objective include:

- 3.6.1 Support partnership efforts by simplifying regulatory process for development near the airport, the City-Parish and BRAC.

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### Objective 3.7

Support partnerships between the City-Parish and the Port of Greater Baton Rouge.

#### Actions to support this objective include:

- 3.7.1 Explore opportunities for the Port to more aggressively participate in financing (ex. through tax-exempt bonds) Port-related business development.
- 3.7.2 Consider expansion of the Port's Foreign Trade Zone Boundaries to provide enhanced coverage of the larger region.

## Economic Development Goal 4

### Connect education and training institutions with private and public sectors.

#### Objective 4.1

Encourage collaborative research and innovation within and among colleges and universities.

#### Actions to support objective 4.1:

- 4.1.1 Collaborate with universities in preparing a university economic development strategy that identifies economic development objectives and roles that align with economic development objectives of the City-Parish.
- 4.1.2 Convene a working group of high-level representatives from Baton Rouge Community College, Southern University, LSU and other parts of the state to explore viable areas of cooperation on research projects.
- 4.1.3 Work with the Louisiana Board of Regents to develop a standardized technology transfer program to improve the transfer

of university innovation into the regional economy.

#### Objective 4.2

Support development of the state's flagship university into a top national research university.

#### Action to support objective 4.2:

- 4.2.1 Enhance partnerships between LSU, private businesses and public agencies in the City-Parish to increase the quality and appeal of LSU course offerings. These could include joint ventures with private industry to construct state-of-the-art facilities on and off campus, and key partnerships to build "centers of excellence" in program areas where LSU has a comparative advantage.

#### Objective 4.3

Support development of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and its world-class research.

#### Actions to support objective 4.3:

- 4.3.1 Enhance cross-training opportunities for faculty and students at LSU and Pennington.
- 4.3.2 Work with BRAC and anchor institutions, such as LSU, Pennington and area hospitals, to develop an economic development strategy focused on biomedical research and innovation.

#### Objective 4.4

Support investments in K-12 and higher education.

#### Actions to support objective 4.4:

- 4.4.1 Formalize a partnership between the East Baton Rouge Public School System, BRAC, universities, and the local business community to provide continued financial

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support and direction for the East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS) Career Education Center.

- 4.4.2 Provide more mentoring programs to disadvantaged populations, particularly K-12 students, that focus on basic “soft” skills as well as technical and vocational skills.
- 4.4.3 Initiate a collaborative process to align the EBRPSS's strategic plan with FUTUREBR's land use plan and economic development objectives.